

North Carolina Senior Citizens Association  
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White House Conference on Aging Forum

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Policy Issue #1 Promoting Wellness for Seniors

A. Why Chosen:

- (1) Studies and reports show the benefits of good nutrition, physical activity and knowledgeable management of chronic disease and disability.
- (2) Attention must be focused on prevention or as a minimum delay of illness or disability.
- (3) Studies have shown that at least one third of all deaths are caused by poor diet, smoking, little physical activity or substance abuse.
- (4) Educational programs about prevention issues can help older adults to make better choices for wellness.
- (5) Prevention works to improve health and reduce health care costs.

B. Possible Barriers to Change:

- (1) Center for Disease Control has not had a funding priority for wellness and prevention.
- (2) Facilities and programs have little funding for prevention.
- (3) Policy makers have limited knowledge of benefits of prevention.
- (4) Priority in health care is on curing or pain management.

C. Proposed Solutions/Implementation Strategies

- (1) Educational programs to be developed on a community basis through facilities such as health departments, community colleges and faith based groups.
- (2) Urge the Congress to increase support for and to encourage the development of health promotion/disease prevention programs for preventable & controllable chronic diseases.
- (3) Have the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention establish a fully funded aging program to meet this need of the elderly.
- (4) Encourage health insurance companies, including Medicare, to have coverage of comprehensive preventive services.
- (5) Encourage foundations to fund demonstrations programs in preventable diseases.

Policy Issue # 2 Enhancing the Seniors Financial Independence

A. Why Chosen;

- (1) Retired workers receive only one-third in retirement benefits as compared to their lifetime average earnings.
- (2) Approximately one-third of elderly receive 90% of their income from Social Security.
- (3) Seniors will live longer and remain active 10-15 years longer than their parents.
- (4) Seniors should have financial resources to remain active, while allowing a greater choice between remaining in the workforce or to retire.

B. Possible Barriers to Change:

- (1) Fear of younger workers that they will have to stay in lower level jobs if seniors stay in the workforce longer.
- (2) Private pensions are being eroded because of a lack of company funding.
- (3) Social Security's future in the hands of the political leaders is now in question.

C. Proposed Solutions/Implementation Strategies:

- (1) Remove all taxes on Social Security payments.
- (2) Abolish early retirement earnings limit.
- (3) Encourage second careers at retirement.
- (4) Encourage the establishment of agencies for senior employment through a competitive grant program.
- (5) Establish clearinghouses on volunteer opportunities run by seniors for seniors.
- (6) Encourage through incentives, the use of seniors as consultants or on a contract basis.
- (7) Remove proposed Social Security changes from the political influences.

Policy Issue # 3    Promote Greater Choices for Seniors

A. Why Chosen:

- (1) Social sciences impose what they think is best for seniors.
- (2) Ageism is still a serious attitude in our youth oriented society.
- (3) Older persons should be looked upon as individuals with unique skills, abilities and needs.
- (4) Mental health services are limited in meeting the changing needs of seniors.

B. Possible Barriers to Change:

- (1) Ageism.
- (2) Older persons assuming an age appropriate behavior.
- (3) Lack of good research on what happens when seniors are allowed choice.

C. Proposed Solutions/Implementations Strategies:

- (1) Educate seniors on living options, helping them to determine what the pros and cons of the options are.
- (2) Increase services in the community so that seniors can live more independently.
- (3) Increase the funding for the study and implementation of naturally occurring retirement communities.
- (4) Encourage faith communities to explore cooperative ways of serving the needs of older persons in their parish by establishing challenge grants similar to the Title III grants.